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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; AFTERMATH OF THE BURNS-SHANNON VISIT,
ARGENTINA-GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST NUCLEAR TERRORISM; NORTH KOREA'S
NUCLEAR AGREEMENT. 02/14/07; BUENOS AIRES

11. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Several dailies carry U/S Burns and A/S Shannon's post-trip declarations praising their visit to the region, and noting 'very positive' relations with Argentina. Clarin also points out the USG offer for Argentina to join the 'Global Initiative against Nuclear Terrorism'. All media give wide coverage to NKDP's nuclear deal whereby it gets rid of its atomic weapons and capabilities in exchange for energy.

12. OPINION PIECES

- "U.S. Invites Argentina to Join Global Fight Against Nuclear Terrorism"

Ana Baron, leading "Clarin" Washington-based correspondent, 02/14) says that during their visit to Buenos Aires, U/S Burns and A/S Shannon "invited Argentina to join the 'Global Initiative against Nuclear Terrorism.' According to an MFA source, the GOA is still analyzing the offer, which will most likely be accepted. The issue will be addressed again during Minister Taiana's trip to Washington. Argentina would be the first and, so far, the only Latin American country to be part of this Initiative.

"..... Burns said he had thanked the Kirchner administration for its regional role in the fight against nuclear proliferation.

"..... Burns and Shannon's trip to Argentina and Brazil clearly shows that the U.S. has decided to counteract the political influence of Chavez' oil dollars in the region, by developing what they call a 'positive agenda' with the rest of the countries, whether from the right, center or left. If with Brazil they emphasized the issue of biofuels, with Argentina, they underscored nuclear non-proliferation."

- "U.S. Says Relations with Argentina Improved"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" Washington-based correspondent Alconada Mon) refers to U/S Burns' declarations saying (02/14) "After the non-declared coldness following the Mar del Plata Summit, the U.S. celebrated yesterday the 'improvement in the relationship' with Argentina over the last 6 months, even though he recognized there are still 'some differences' regarding 'regional challenges' such as Venezuela or Cuba.

"..... He first praised Brazil, with which the U.S. maintains 'one of the most important partnerships in the world', and then, on Argentina, he said their 'very positive' visit shows that '(though) the relationship had problems in the past, now differences have been left behind.'

".... However, he appeared slightly uncomfortable when he refused to anticipate the U.S. vote at Interpol on the AMIA probe, and on the issue of Transener. He also praised Argentina for its leading hemispheric role on nuclear non-proliferation and the fight against terrorism...."

- "Objective of an Initiative"

Ricardo Kirschbaum, managing editor of leading Clarin (02/14) wonders 'Why did the U.S. invite Argentina to join the 'Global Initiative to fight Nuclear Terrorism' According to a State Department source, the U.S. believes the country is a 'key regional leader in the fight against nuclear non-proliferation.' Kirschbaum concludes this is a 'consolation prize,' for when the U.S. forced Argentina to dismantle its highly advanced nuclear development program (in the 80's.)

".... Now, the proposal they presented Kirchner is part of a U.S. regional strategy seeking to build a positive agenda with Argentina and Brazil with a major goal: isolating Chavez by reinforcing ties with Brasilia and Buenos Aires, where Washington believes South America's power axis should be.

- "A Direct Message for Tehran"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" Washington-based correspondent Alconada Mon opines (02/14) 'North Korea's agreement, which must still be confirmed by facts, represents a direct message to Tehran. The problem is that Iranian leaders may have different interpretations of the same message, with high risks to international stability...."

- "Extorsion"

EXTORSION. Leading "Clarín" international editor Marcelo Cantelmi, leading "Clarín" international editor, writes

(02/14) "this is a clear victory for Pyongyang, but as a consequence of Washington's political decline rather than its ability. North Korea is another fisherman taking advantage of Iraq's troubled waters and the chaos in the U.S. administration."

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